

REMARK

Applicants' representatives wish to thank Examiner Szymanski for pointing out the errors in the claims. The claims have been amended according to his suggestions.

Claims 1-16 are pending.

Introduction

The present invention provides a document validation procedure where if one of the steps of examining either (1) the digital signature or (2) the document structure determines that the document is invalid, then the other step is immediately terminated. This novel arrangement prevents the use of any unnecessary processing resources that would otherwise be consumed in by performing unnecessary validation steps.

Before the advent of the present invention, document validation proceeded sequentially, as outlined in **Figure 1** of the application. The document is first received **100**, the digital certificate information is extracted from the digital signature **110**, a connection is made to a third party service to verify the validity of the digital signature **120**, the digital signature is verified against the document **130**, the document is then check for structural validity **140** and then syntactic validity **150** before finally confirming document validation **160**.

In contrast to the art exemplified in **Figure 1**, wherein the steps of document validation are processed linearly, the present invention provides a method of document validation wherein the steps are processed concurrently. As soon as one step shows the document to be invalid, the validation process immediately halts, saving precious processing resources. This concurrent processing protocol is shown in **Figure 2** of the application. A document is received **100**. Subsequently, the steps of extracting digital certificate information, connecting to verify digital signature validity, verifying the digital signature against the document, and checking the document for internal validity (all denoted by **200**) are performed concurrently before confirming document validation **160**.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Office has rejected claims 1 to 16 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as anticipated by US Patent No. 5,958,050 ("Griffin"). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. Griffin does not teach a method of document validation wherein the failure of either the step of examining the digital signature or the structure of a document halts any other steps in the validation procedure.

Griffin is directed to "an improved trust management" wherein document structure and digital signature are determined sequentially, in this case, document structure is determined prior to the digital signature examination: "The code . . . is provided to a code analyzer, which determines what classes are called . . . With this information, the trust manager reads certificates . . . These claims in these certificates are strung together . . . until the claims prove that the code can be trusted" (column 6, lines 54-64). In Griffin, the code analyzer first analyzes the code to determine information regarding the structure of the code, such as the classes and methods used, and then sequentially passes this information to the trust manager: "Once code analyzer determines this information, it passes the information to trust manager" (column 7, lines 23-25). Griffin is thus directed to sequential steps

In stark contrast, the present invention avoids this sequential analysis and performs these steps concurrently. If one step should fail, then any other steps that have not completed are halted and the document is marked invalid. Griffin does not teach a method of document validation where other steps in the procedure are halted upon the failure of another step.

Therefore, Griffin does not teach each and every element and limitation of claim 1 of the present invention and cannot anticipate the present invention. Because claims 2-15 depend from claim 1, they are not anticipated by Griffin. Finally, claim 16 comprises the features equivalent to those of the steps recited in claim 1 and is therefore also not anticipated by Griffin.

Conclusion

Griffin does not teach a document validation procedure where if either the step of examining the digital signature or the step of examining the document structure determines that the document is not valid, then the other step is immediately terminated prior to determining whether that step is valid. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Response to Office Action of July 28, 2005
Application No. 10/047,954

Objections to the claims

The objections to the claims have been obviated by amendment. Claim 6 now depends from claim 1, and the typographical error in claim 10 has been corrected. No new matter has been added.

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CONCLUSION AND REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

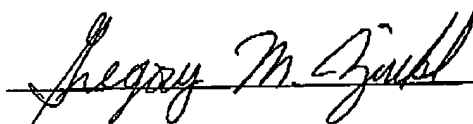
Reconsideration and withdrawal of all claim rejections are respectfully requested. Applicants believe that the present application is in condition for allowance.

Should the Examiner have any questions or would like to discuss any matters in connection with the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (312) 627-2126 or gzinkl@dykema.com.

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